

6-25-2008

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Recommended Citation

Wright, Lori, "Entrepreneurial Internship Program Connects Businesses To UNH Students: 2008" (2008). *UNH Today*. 478.
<https://scholars.unh.edu/news/478>

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Entrepreneurial Internship Program Connects Businesses To UNH Students

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UNH Media Relations

June 25, 2008

DURHAM, N.H. -- In today's competitive job market, companies are increasingly tapping into state educational institutions to secure quality high-tech workers. At the University of New Hampshire, businesses and students benefit from an entrepreneurial internship program that has successfully matched students with businesses for nearly a decade.

In its ninth year, the Entrepreneurial Internship course places seniors at the Whittemore School of Business and Economics with entrepreneurial ventures in various stages of business development and firms that service the entrepreneurial sector. These mentoring relationships allow companies to utilize the student resources available to them while the students gain valuable work experience.

"The students look forward to the exposure and experience from working with interesting and exciting companies and the close contact with business professionals at these organizations. While the students don't necessarily have the technical experience needed in many high tech start-ups, they do provide the business education that helps such companies thrive," said Jeffrey Sohl, director of the UNH Center for Venture Research, who teaches the class.

"Many of the graduates have gone on to continue working with the company that they interned with, making this a great opportunity for companies to get a first-hand look at the up-and-coming future workforce," Sohl said.

Companies that have participated in the past include PC Connection, Portsmouth Tea Company, CCA Global Partners, eCoast Sales Solutions, Good Leads, VKernel and PelletSales.com.

"Our company has participated in and benefited from UNH's entrepreneurship course since the program's inception in 2000," said Roger Brock, vice president of employee relations and staffing at PC Connection, Inc. "Our ongoing association with the program has allowed us to increase our exposure to the Whittemore School student population. This exposure has had a direct positive impact on our corporate sales recruiting efforts, resulting in new hires from former class participants."

Students work 8 to 10 hours a week for 13 weeks, as well as attend weekly in-class meetings where they learn about topics such as venture capital, private angel investors, due diligence, and the new economy in New Hampshire. In addition to the internship and class time, the students team up to work with nonprofit organizations.

"PelletSales.com was fortunate to have had the help of Kiryl Harris, who came to us as an intern through UNH, and who then came aboard on a full-time basis after graduation. Kir

brought an innovative perspective to our business, particularly with regard to how to become more 'green' ourselves," said Jon Strimling, president of PelletSales.com.

The cost for companies to participate in the internship program ranges from \$500 to \$750 per student interning at the company. Companies within a one-hour commute from UNH's Durham campus are preferred. Companies interested in participating or learning more about the fall 2008 internship program should contact Laura Hill at 603-862-3341 or laura.hill@unh.edu

"I was impressed with the quality of students and their willingness to roll up their sleeves and get the work done" said Alex Bakman, founder and CEO of VKernel.

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